The AIS Current

Michigan's Aquatic Invasive Species Newsletter:
The current wave of AIS information

Michigan's AIS Program is cooperatively implemented by the Michigan Departments of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), Natural Resources (MDNR), and Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD).

Summer Youth Employment Program Tackles Invasive Species

The State of Michigan has fewer invasive plants, thanks to a unique program that employs inner-city youth to work on nature projects while experiencing the outdoors. The Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) is a joint effort between the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. The SYEP hires high school students in Flint, Saginaw, Detroit, and Pontiac to work on a variety of tasks, and in 2015, a new session was added for the youth to manually remove an aquatic invasive plant called European frogbit. Four Detroit youth groups spent one month combined at the Lake St. Clair Metropark, armed with waders, gloves, and buckets, to collect as much European frogbit as they could. In just four weeks, the youth collected and disposed of an impressive 25,000 pounds of the invasive plant!

This summer, the SYEP youth will be removing more European frogbit from Lake St. Clair, as well as other locations with large populations of the invasive plant. The SYEP also hired on a new full-time coordinator, Misty Harden, who will guide the students during other exciting projects around their respective cities. These projects include visiting boat launches to educate the public about aquatic invasive species (AIS), painting the slogan "Clean. Drain. Dry." on the boat launch ramps to remind boaters to prevent the spread of AIS, and building wader-wash stations for anglers to disinfect their gear after being in a river. Not only will the youth be learning about Michigan's natural resources, but activities like these can be great opportunities to enhance various life skills, such as teamwork and communication.

One of the best aspects about the SYEP is that it gives the participants an opportunity to experience these places and activities for the first time. Last year, this program gave many youth their first trip to a state park, first camping experience, and first time wearing waders. These experiences are aimed to inspire the high school students to care for the natural resources surrounding them, and maybe even discover a passion to pursue a career in natural resource management!

The SYEP will run from June through September 2016. Any questions about the AIS portion of the SYEP can be directed to Misty Harden (hardenm@michigan.gov).

A SYEP student removes invasive European frogbit

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Visit Michigan's new invasive species webpage at **www.michigan.gov/invasives**

RIPPLE: A New Education Program for Aquarists & Water Gardeners

RIPPLE
REDUCE INVASIVE
PET & PLANT ESCAPES

Exotic animals can make great lifelong companions, and ornamental plants can add immense beauty to landscapes, but if let loose these species can wreak havoc on Michigan's ecosystems. Characteristics such as hardiness and rapid growth make them popular and desirable as pets and landscaping features, but these characteristics also contribute to their ability to become destructive invasive species if they escape from home aquariums and water gardens. These species can displace less aggressive native species as well as introduce disease.

To educate Michigan retailers and residents about proper containment methods and the risks associated with releasing aquarium and water garden species, Michigan State University Extension teamed up with the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development to create a new education campaign, RIPPLE: Reduce Invasive Pet & PLant Escapes.

The message of the campaign is simple. If you enjoy keeping an aquarium or water garden, take simple steps to prevent non-native species from escaping into Michigan's lakes and streams. Do not dispose of the water or unwanted plants or animals in waterways where they may introduce disease or become established. Do not flush or compost them either. Good practices include:

- Inspect and rinse new aquatic plants to rid them of seeds, plant fragments, snails and fish.
- Build water gardens well away from other waters.
- Seal aquatic plants for disposal in a plastic bag in the trash. Do not compost.
- Give or trade unwanted fish or plants with another hobbyist, environmental learning center, aquarium or zoo.
- Contact a veterinarian or pet retailer for guidance on humane disposal of animals.

The State of Michigan has laws restricting and prohibiting the sale of some animals and plants; however, it does not include all potentially harmful species. Copies of RIPPLE publications, including posters, brochures, aquarium tank clings and more for use in classrooms or retail businesses are available through the Michigan Department Agriculture and Rural Development. Contact Mike Bryan at (517) 284-5642 or bryanm@michigan.gov. More information can be found at www.michigan.gov/invasives regarding the RIPPLE campaign.

(Article by Paige Filice, Graduate Student, Michigan State University)

Stay in the loop – sign up for updates on Michigan's Invasive Species Program!

Visit www.michigan.gov/invasives, click on the red envelope on the right hand side, enter your e-mail address, select "Invasive Species," and hit submit.

New Regulations for Personal Collection of Bait in Michigan Impact Aquatic Invasive Species

The Natural Resources Commission recently approved new baitfish regulations that will help protect Michigan's waters from aquatic invasive species. Any personally caught bait must now only be used where it was captured or in a connected waterbody.

What that means for anglers is that bait can be caught within a tributary of a lake and used within the lake that is connected to the tributary. This principle also applies to chains of lakes that are void of barriers. However, if a manmade dam exists on a tributary that prevents free movement of baitfish between the lake and other connected waters, baitfish may not be moved or used within those non-connected waters.

For example, if you capture bait in a small stream that is connected to a lake or network of other rivers and lakes, you can use that bait in any of those waterbodies. The general rule of thumb is if the baitfish can swim freely from the capture location to the location of use you are in compliance.

The DNR has heard from anglers across the state who are concerned with this regulation. Fisheries Order 245 was put in place in 2007 to protect Michigan's waters from the movement of fish diseases and aquatic invasive species. Viral hemorrhagic septicemia (VHS) is one of many diseases that can be moved from one waterbody to another through the movement of baitfish. To protect the state's fisheries from this threat the DNR requires commercial baitfish catchers to test their baitfish for diseases prior to sale.

Further, aquatic invasive species (AIS) significantly impact Michigan's fisheries and there are many invasive species that can be easily introduced to new waters through baitfish collection. Species like rusty crayfish and round goby have been spread by anglers collecting their own bait for use in a different location.

"The ecological and economic impact of diseases and AIS is very significant in Michigan and across the Great Lakes Region. These updated regulations provide our fisheries further protection," says Assistant Fisheries Division Chief Todd Grischke.

For more information on Michigan's baitfish regulations, visit www.michigan.gov/fishingguide or contact Nick Popoff at (517) 284-5830.

Species like rusty crayfish have been spread by anglers collecting their own bait for use in a different location.

Resource Spotlight

Download the Midwest Invasive Species Information System mobile app to report and map invasive species where you live and travel:

MISIN Midwest Invasive Species Information Network

www.misin.msu.edu

Regional Partnerships Aid Residents in Invasive Species Management

Cooperative efforts across Michigan are having a big impact on invasive species and are a valuable resource to local residents.

A lot of Michiganders are aware of invasive species and the impacts they cause, but that awareness takes on a new level of importance when you are directly affected. It can be a truly eye-opening experience when Japanese knotweed grows through the foundation of your home, when your lake becomes choked with Eurasian watermilfoil, or when all your oak trees die from oak wilt within a single year.

When suddenly faced with invasive species impacts, many people also become aware of the challenges associated with managing invasive species, such as a lack of funding, technical knowledge, equipment, or coordination with other efforts. To overcome these challenges, it is most effective to take part in a larger cooperative effort. After all, invasive species do not recognize property lines or jurisdictional boundaries like we do! Luckily, Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas (CISMAs) are grass-roots, regional organizations that deal with invasive species issues. CISMA partners include citizens, businesses, non-profits, and units of government throughout Michigan, and residents can get involved with these local groups to get help with invasive species management.

CISMAs build upon a concept started by the U.S. Forest Service, which funded organizations to control terrestrial weed populations across the country. Although there are many other names for a CISMA (such as Cooperative Weed Management Area, Invasive Species Network, or Invasive Species Coalition), all of these groups have expanded their efforts to include all invasive species, whether plant, animal, insect, or fungus. To promote these types of cooperative efforts, the Michigan Invasive Species Grant Program (MISGP) has a focus area devoted to aiding in the formation of collaborative partnerships that cover every county throughout the state. Currently, 77.5 of the 83 counties in Michigan are covered by CISMAs, and efforts continue to cover the rest.

In 2015, the MISGP awarded funds to 10 CISMAS, and just a year later, the state is already seeing significant results for dealing with invasive species. The projects support efforts for education and outreach, prevention, early detection and response, and long-term strategic planning. For example, the Wild Rivers Invasive Species Coalition (WRISC) is one of the first CISMAs in Michigan and includes Dickinson and Menominee counties in Michigan and three adjoining counties in Wisconsin. Working across many boundaries, WRISC's partners deal with the entire range of invasive species on both land and water.

For instance, WRISC surveys 10 lakes that are now enrolled in the Michigan Clean Water Corps Cooperative Lakes Monitoring Program, which provides standardized protocols and sampling equipment. These surveys analyze the overall health of the lakes, as well as monitors for certain invasive species, like spiny waterflea and zebra mussels. The information is used to understand the management needs of each lake. WRISC also reaches out

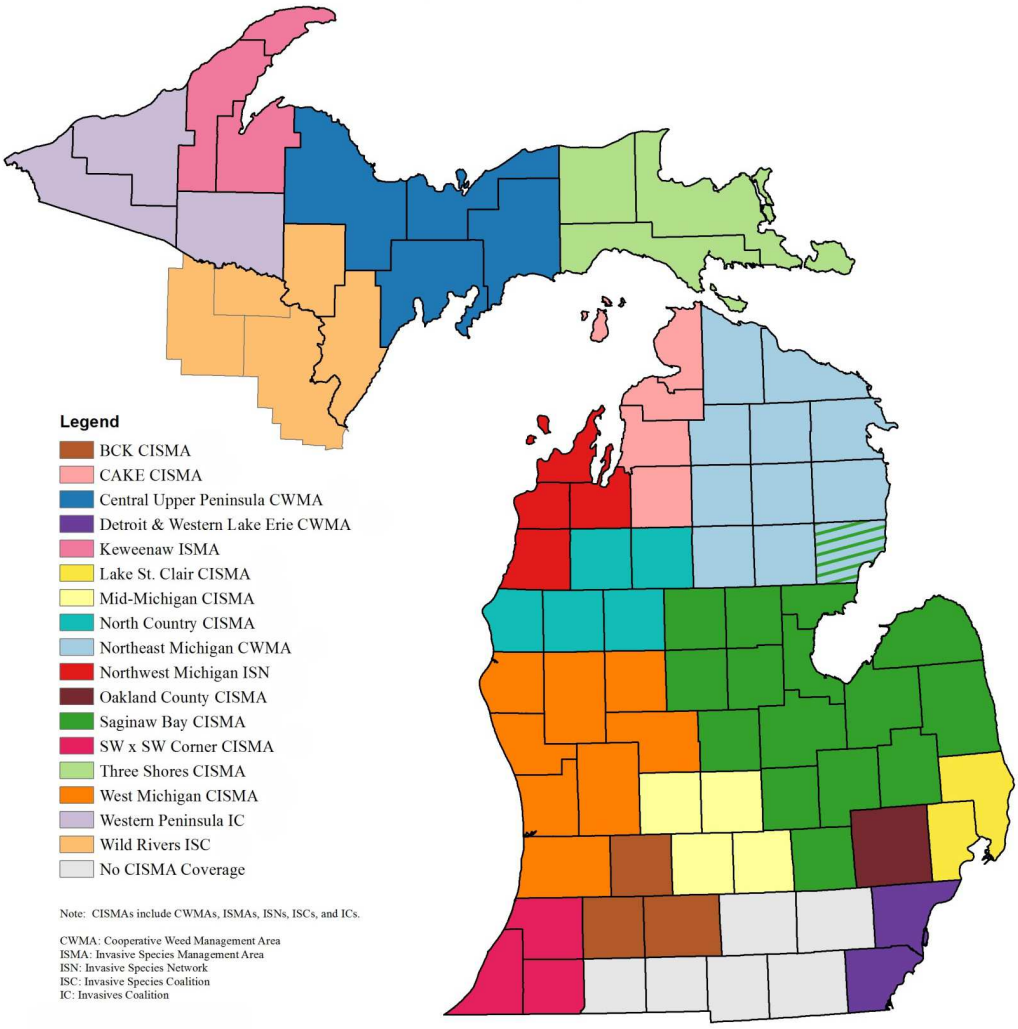
Regional Partnerships Aid Residents in Invasive Species Management (cont.)

to the public by participating in events such as the "Landing Blitz" and Clean Boats, Clean Waters activities, which teach boaters how they can help prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species.

On land, WRISC maps the locations of invasive species and treats them in effective ways to control the populations. Last year, WRISC partners surveyed over 480 miles of roadside, mapped 320 new infestations, investigated 15 reports from area residents, and treated 25 acres. Previously unknown populations were found and treated efficiently and effectively. Over 40 volunteers were involved with WRISC's efforts and the partners are regularly involved in public events! WRISC is also a partner with the "PlayCleanGo" campaign which informs the public how they can help prevent the spread of invasive species on land.

The partners of each CISMA often have unique insights into how invasive species are impacting their region. As they work together, the CISMA benefits from the "lessons learned" by individual partners, and this enhances the group's ability to manage and control invasive species for everyone else in their region. This has established CISMA partners as regional invasive species experts who have proven to be valuable assets to residents facing invasive species challenges.

The success of CISMAs is due to the generous donations of volunteer time and effort, donations of funding, and a willingness on behalf of the partners in each region to collaborate. For more information about CISMAs in your area, please visit www.michiganinvasives.org/managementareas.



Invasive Species Education and Outreach News

Invasive Species as part of the Michigan Science Olympiad

The Michigan Science Olympiad, one of America's largest academic tournaments, was held on the campus of Michigan State University on April 20, 2016. New to this year's list of approximately 23 science events was invasive species. Nearly 100 high school and middle school teams competed in the event, which included a quiz, live indoor invasive specimens stations and identification of invasive vegetation on campus. The event was developed and supervised by DNR staff. Hundreds of Michigan schools that competed at regional levels in February through April also embraced the study of invasive species this past year.

Sea Lamprey at DNR Visitor Centers

Live sea lamprey are a terrific gateway critter to introduce invasive species to young people. DNR visitor centers, in partnership with the Great Lakes Fisheries Commission and Hammond Bay Research Station, have placed live sea lamprey at parks and hatcheries across the state to kick off invasive species programming. The DNR also presented a popular invasive species session at the Michigan Science Teachers Association Conference this past March that drew more than 70 educators. As DNR education services manager Kevin Frailey says, "It's much easier to get people to listen to information on oak wilt, once you have lured them in with a live squiggling creature."

DNR staff use live sea lamprey for outreach purposes

Boat Washing Partnership Project Continues

The DEQ is again partnering with the U.S. Forest Service and Michigan State University (MSU) to demonstrate how boats and equipment can be inspected and cleaned to prevent the unintended transport and spread of AIS.

This year's partnership includes a second DEQ-owned mobile boat wash as well as a second crew from MSU that is traveling throughout the state this summer to various boating access sites and water-related community events. The MSU interns contacted over 1455 boaters and anglers in 2015 and washed at least 177 boats. The expanded crew, additional mobile boat wash and increased public interest are anticipated to help surpass those numbers this summer. For more information, contact Kevin Walters, MDEQ, at waltersk3@michigan.gov or 517- 284-5473.

For more information on Michigan's AIS Program, please contact Sarah LeSage, AIS Program Coordinator, at 517-243-4735 or **lesages@michigan.gov**. You can also visit **www.michigan.gov/invasives**.